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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2462

S E C R E T MOSCOW 5686

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, US, UR
SUBJ: MY CALL ON GROMYKO: BILATERAL ISSUES

1. I BEGAN THIS PORTION OF THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR

THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN HAVING IN NEW YORK. I NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR SCRANTON ANDOTHERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR OUTRAGE AT THE TERRORIST INCIDENTS AND LED PLEDGES TO DO
THEIR UTMOST TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. GROMYKO RESPONDED FIRMLY THAT IT WASAN
"ELEMENTARY REQUIREMENT" TO PROVIDE FOR THE SECURITY OF FOREIGN DIPLO MATS.
"OUR PEOPLE CANNOT LIVE CALMLY AND SECURELY," HE SAID. THE SITUATION IS
COMPARABLE TO THAT IN SOME UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES, HE SAID, WHERE DIPLOMATS MUST BE CONSTANTLY CONCERNED ABOUT BEING KIDNAPPED OR SHOT AT
OR EXPOSED TO SOME OTHEROUTRAGE. THERE SIMPLY IS NOT ADEQUATE PROTECT-ION
HE SAID. THE US EXPRESSES ITS OPPOSITION TO THE TERRORISTS, AND TO TERRORISM IN GENERAL, BUT WHAT HAPPENS IN PRACTICE, HE ASKED RHETORIC-ALLY.
NOT ONE PERSON IS PUNISHED, HE ASSERTED, AND ADDED, "WE ARE VERY ANGRY". THE THREATS TO PEOPLES LIVES ARE SIMPLY NOT TOLERABLE. THE NEW

YORK POLICE SEEM UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING EFFECTIVE HE SAID, AND REPEATED
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THAT NO ONE HAS YET BEEN PUNISHED.

2. I REPLIED THAT SOME PEOPLE HAD RECENTLY BEEN ARRESTED AND THAT WE HOPED FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER ARRESTS OF THE GUILTY PARTIES. I POINTED OUT THAT ONE OF THE PROBLEMS CONCERNS THE UNWILLINGNESS OF SOVIET OFFICIALS TOTESTIFY IN US COURTS. I POINTED OUT THAT US LAW DOES NOT ALLOW FOR CONVICTION ON THE BASIS OF INDIRECT EVIDENCE AND THAT WE HOPED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT ITS OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY WHEN THEY HAD KNOWLEDGE OF CRIMINAL EVIDENCE.

3. I THEN TURNED TO THE MATTER OF THE BOMB THREATS, TELEPHONE CALLS AND LETTERS IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD, WHICH I EMPHASIZED DID NOT HELP THE AUTHORITIES IN NEW YORK OR THE STATE OF OUR RELATIONS GENERALLY. ON THE CONTRARY, SUCH ACTIONS HERE HAD THE EFFECT OF ENCOURAGING THOSE ELEMENTS WHO SEEK PUBLICITY FOR THEIR CAUSE AND WHO OPPOSE THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

4. GROMYKO REPLIED THAT IF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WERE TO PUBLISH THE FULL STORIES OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED IN NEW YORK -- IF THEY HAD NOT DECIDED TO RESTRAIN SEVERLY THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION PUBLISHED -- THE REACTION IN MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD WOULD BE "100 TIMES WORSE". PEOPLE WOULD BE OUTRAGED. KORNIYENKO CHIMED IN ON THIS POINT SAYING THAT THE DECISION TO RESTRICT INFORMATION ON THE EVENTS IN NEW YORK WAS INTENDED TO PREVENT A STRONGER REACTION FROM THE SOVIET PEOPLE. I REITERATED THAT WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEW YORK SITUATION AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT BROUGHT UNDER EFFECTIVE CONTROL.

5. GROMYKO THEN ASKED, IN A BANTERING WAY, WHETHER THE US HAS "CRUCIFIED" THE WORD "DETENTE". I COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH WE NO LONGER USED THE WORD, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN OUR POLICY, AND THE SOVIETS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE SUBSTANCE BEHIND THE SHIFT IN TERMINOLOGY. GROMYKO SAID THAT THE EFFORT TO DEAL WITH WORDS IN SUCH A MANNER WOULD RAISE LINGUISTIC SCIENCES TO NEW HEIGHTS. MORE SERIOUSLY, HE SAID, THAT "WE ARE PLEASED" WITH THE STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY AND OTHERS AND CONSIDER THEIR DISCUSSIONS ON THE NEED TO CONTINUE SEEKING IMPROVED RELATIONS AS "USEFUL". I MENTIONED THAT PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT "DETENTE" WAS A FOREIGN WORD WHICH WAS NOT PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD BY MANY AMERICANS.
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VIKTOR SUKHODRIYEV COMMENTED THAT THE WORD HAD LONG BEEN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONAIRIES AND THAT THE DEFINITION CORRESPONDS VERY CLOSELY TO THE SOVIET MEANING OF "RELAXATION OF TENSIONS". GROMYKO COMMENTED THAT THE AFFIRMATION OF THE POLICY WAS IMPORTANT BUT THAT EVEN

THIS COULD BE "DOWNED" IN BROADER AND MORE CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS. GROMYKO THEN COMMENTED BRIEFLY ON THE US ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE PROG-

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RESS
OF THE PRIMARIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW FACES.

6. I THEN BROUGHT TO GROMYKO'S ATTENTION, AS A PERSONAL MATTER, THE QUESTION OF THE SUPPORT FLIGHT, AND THE SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO ALLOW A NEW PLANE TO COME IN. GROMYKO SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM AND THAT HE THOUGHT WE WERE WELL SATISFIED WITH THE SPECIAL UNDERSTANDING WHICH PERMITTED SUPPORT FLIGHTS. I SAID THAT WE ARE SATISFIED IN PRINCIPLE BUT THAT WE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT WAS PREFERABLE TO USE AN OLD PISTON-ENGINE AIR-CRAFT IN PLACE OF A MODERN, BUT SMALLER JET. KORNIYENKO AT THIS POINT OPENED A FILE CONTAINING MANY PAPERS AND DISPUTED MY CONTENTION THAT THE PLANE WAS SMALLER. HE SAID THAT WE HAD ASKED FOR TRUCKS TO CARRY 7000 POUNDS" OF BAGGAGE AND MATERIALS ON THE PLANE, WHEREAS THE OLD PLANE COULD CARRY ONLY 3000. I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT THE FIGURES WERE INCORRECT AND THAT I WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING THE SOVIETS LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION. I SAID THAT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE PRESENT FLIGHT THIS WEEK, BUT THAT WE WOULD BE PLANNING ANOTHER SUPPORT FLIGHT SOMETIME IN MAY AND HOPED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD VIEW FAVOR-ABLY OUR WISH TO USE THE MORE CONVENIENT AND MORE MODERN PLANE. GROMYKO LISTENED TO THESE REMARKS BUT DISPLAYED NO REACTION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

7. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS CORDIAL THROUGHOUT, EXCEPT ON THE NEW YORK PROBLEMS, AND GROMYKO WAS IN A RELAXED, EVEN BANTERING, MOOD.
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